

Literature

Michael Morpurgo

Learning objectives

- The students learn about the author Michael Morpurgo, who has written a lot of books for young people, and read / listen to an extract from one of his books.
- In the project stage, the students write a blurb for their favourite book.

Useful vocabulary

author blurb cover (of a book) kingdom
relationship

Preparation

You could read one of Michael Morpurgo's books yourself. Ask the students to bring in their favourite book so they can use it in the project.

Warmer

Write these (unreal!) books and authors on the board and ask the students to match them.

<i>How to get famous</i>	Mark Ed Low
<i>Danger!</i>	Liza Lott
<i>Funny Stories</i>	A. Lone
<i>10 Years on an Island</i>	Luke Out
<i>The Bad Student</i>	B.A. Star
<i>The Truth?</i>	Jo King

Answers

How to get famous B.A. Star (be a star)
Danger! Luke Out (Look out!)
Funny Stories Jo King (joking)
10 Years on an Island A. Lone (alone)
The Bad Student Mark Ed Low (marked low)
The Truth? Liza Lott (lies a lot)

- 1** Ask *What do you call the person who writes a book?* (the author) It is unlikely the students will know Michael Morpurgo, so ask about famous authors from their country. Get the students to name and describe particular books they like.

Pre-teach *charity* (when you give money and help to people, animals or things in a bad situation), and *relationships* (how people feel and behave with other people). The students read the text and complete the fact file.

Answers

- 1** Michael Morpurgo **2** 1943 **3** French
4 officer in the army; primary school teacher
5 Farms for City Children **6** over 100
7 *War Horse*, *Kensuke's Kingdom*

Extension activity

Write these titles of other books by Michael Morpurgo on the board. The students should guess what each book is about and whether they think it would be interesting. Stronger students could check their predictions by looking up the title and summary on the Internet.

What shall we do with it?

Mr Nobody's Eyes

Waiting for Anya

Alone on a Wide, Wide Sea

An Elephant in the Garden

- 2** Tell the students to look at the cover of the book and back cover blurb and answer the questions.

Answers

- 1** A boy falls off a boat into the sea. We know he wakes up on an island and someone is helping him by bringing food and water.
2 There is a boy called Michael, and someone else on the island.
3 Comments on the back cover say the book is 'wonderful' and a 'dazzling adventure', so it is a good book.

- 3** Ask the students *Have you ever been on a sailing trip or a long boat journey? What is dangerous about sailing trips?*

The students put the sentences in order. They are told that the first one is **d**. When the sentences are in order, they give a brief summary of the plot of the book. Tell the students to pay attention to the pronouns, for example **d** talks about Michael and his family and **g** begins with 'They', so it is a possibility for the second sentence. In **a**, the students need to think about what *this* refers to.


Ask the students to think about what happens after **c** – what will the old man do and say?

Fast finishers

The students think of three more ways Michael could get off the island, for example he could make a big message 'Help!' with stones on the beach.

Answers

The order is: d, g, b, e, a, f, h, c

- 4  2.33 Play the recording for the students to listen to as they read. **Stronger students** could try and just listen first.

When you are going through the answers, say that 'Damedal' in Japanese means 'forbidden' (explain as something like *No* or *You must not*.)

Answers

- 1 The old man is angry because Michael has made a fire.
- 2 Chinese or Japanese.
- 3 *Forbidden* or *No*.

Extension activity

Explain the phrase *catch your breath* (to stop and recover) and get the students to make three sentences with other meanings of *catch*, for example *I caught the 7.00 train, I don't want to catch a cold, Catch the ball!*

- 5 Check that the students know the meaning of the adjectives, for example, *If you wanted something good to happen but it didn't, you feel ...* (disappointed).
Arrange the students into pairs. They read the text again and discuss the questions using the adjectives in the box.

Possible answers

At the beginning of the text Michael feels surprised, confused and possibly worried.
Kensuke feels angry.
In the middle of the text Michael feels hopeful.
Kensuke feels confused, angry and worried.
At the end of the text Michael feels sad, disappointed and lonely.
Kensuke feels angry.

Extension activity

The students correct Kensuke's mistakes in English, for example *No fire!* = *You must not have a fire here!*
The students could also continue the story in Chapter 5 and imagine what happened next, and if they're really interested, they could get the book and compare their ideas with the original.

- 6 Tell the students to write six sentences about the book, as in the model, using six different adjectives.

Sample answers

I think Michael was confused when he met the man.
I think perhaps Kensuke was lonely before he met Michael.
Kensuke was a little bit angry after he saw the fire.
Michael felt hopeful before Kensuke spoke to him.
Michael was surprised that Kensuke was angry.
It seems Kensuke felt worried about the fire.
I think Michael was sad after this.

Subject learning

In the next stage, the students are going to write a blurb for their favourite book. Encourage a class discussion on books and reading.

What kind of books should children read at school?

Is it better to read a book or watch a film about a story?

Do you prefer fiction or books about real life?

Would you like to write a book one day?

Will we still need paper books in the future?

Project

- Explain what a blurb is. Show some examples on the back of real books.
- Tell the students to choose a book they like. In pairs, they can compare their books and say why they have chosen them.
- Elicit what kind of information could go in the blurb (what happens and where, the main characters, why the book is great). Elicit what kind of information could go in the fact file (the author's name, age, nationality, education, best/important books, etc.).
- At home, the students write a blurb and a fact file about the author. The students could also design a new cover for the book.
- In class, they talk about the author and read out their blurb.
- The class decides which sounds the most interesting book. You could then read part of this book in a later lesson.

Cooler

Arrange the students into groups of five. Give each of them a famous person from the present or the past, for example Lionel Messi, Cleopatra, Alexander the Great, Venus Williams and William Shakespeare. Explain that they are in a boat in a bad storm. The boat is too heavy, so four people must get out of the boat and try to swim. Each person should explain why they should stay in the boat and the others should get out. For example, Venus might say, 'I've got a famous sister and she wants to play tennis with me again. Lionel is very fit so he can swim. Cleopatra ...'